

BRIEFS

CITY MAKING GRAB FOR CHURCH PROPERTY

HOUSTON (BP) — Two African American churches in Houston, Texas, have filed a lawsuit in response to what they say is an illegal city attempt to seize their property for an urban renewal project. Tory Gunsolley, president and CEO of the Houston Housing Authority, told the Houston Chronicle the city wants land owned by the churches as part of a redevelopment. The city tried to buy property from both churches before initiating an attempt to seize the property through eminent domain laws.

SANCTITY OF LIFE STUDIES AVAILABLE

NASHVILLE (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources has free sanctity of human life Bible studies for download. The free lessons are available in each of LifeWay's ongoing curriculum lines: Bible Studies for Life, Explore the Bible and The Gospel Project. The sessions for each curriculum are available at LifeWay.com/Article/sanctity-of-life-Sunday-free-bible-study-lessons.

JAMES: FIRING OVER HOMOSEXUAL STANCE

DALLAS (BP) — College football analyst Craig James has filed a religious discrimination lawsuit against Fox Sports alleging he was fired because of his Christian belief that homosexuality is sinful. Eric Shanks, president of Fox Sports, said in a 2014 deposition that James' on-air performance had nothing to do with the decision to terminate him. In response to James' firing, a Fox Sports spokesman told the Dallas Morning News in 2013, "We just asked ourselves how Craig's statements [about homosexuality] would play in our human resources department. He couldn't say those things here." The lawsuit seeks monetary relief of \$100,000 or more plus punitive damages, attorney's fees, and a declaration that the firing was illegal.

2015 SEND NORTH AMERICA CONFERENCE

'Starting a movement'

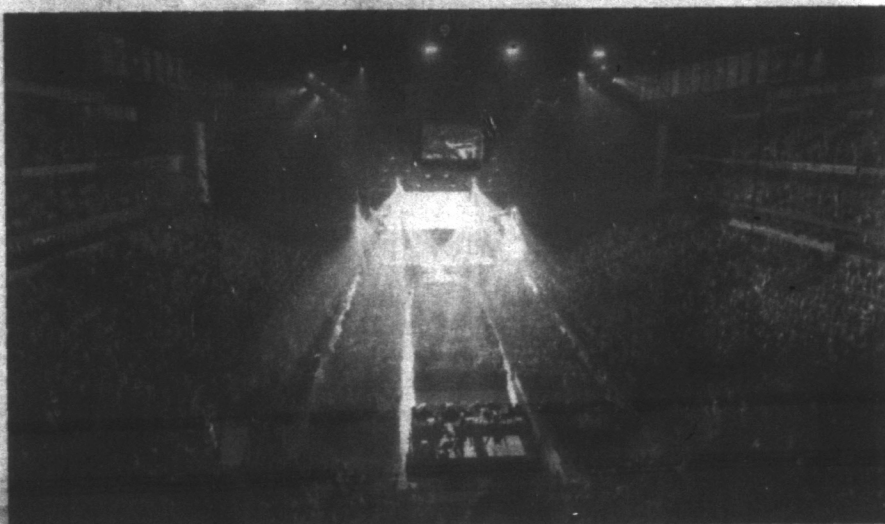
Attendees challenged to live out faith daily

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — As thousands of 2015 Send North America Conference attendees returned from Nashville to their everyday lives, leaders of the event said the real long term impact will be measured in the next steps participants take to live out their faith daily.

"This is not about a conference," North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell told attendees in Bridgestone Arena at the close of the gathering on Aug. 4. "It's about God starting a movement. This is something we are committed to for the rest of our lives."

As the two-day event drew to a close, the 13,607 participants were encouraged to find their place in the everyday mission of God and commit to next steps. NAMB officials registered 357 Mississippians at the event.

Registered nurse Madison Roaton of New Albany decided to tag along for a visit to Nashville when she heard her friends dis-



SEND CONFERENCE

cussing a road trip. She had never heard of the Send Conference but after the first day, she was ready to explore her next steps in missions.

"I've been involved in medical missions with my church," said Roaton. She traveled to Ecuador this year and Greece last year on mission, so the idea of a life on mission resonated with her. "This has me thinking about connecting what I do with my mission."

Others were encouraged by reminders that they are part of a network — a family — as they serve on the mission field. "I came because of the camaraderie of all the church planters," said Gabe Dodd. Dodd, a church planter in Dahlgene, Ga., who launched The Branch Church last year, came with his sending church, First Church in Alpharetta, Ga.

"I came because of the church planting mentality, and the desire to advance the Gospel in America. It just helped me know that I am not alone. Being able to worship with my brothers and sisters who are doing everything we can to advance the Gospel was exhilarating," Dodd said.

see SEND on p. 6

S. Sudanese pastors detained



NOT YET FREE — South Sudanese pastors Yat Michael (left) and Peter Yein Reith, once under threat of execution, were prevented from leaving the country Aug. 6 after being released from prison a day earlier. (BP photo courtesy of Christian Solidarity Worldwide)

JUBA, South Sudan (BP) — Two South Sudanese Christian pastors released from prison Aug. 5 after eight months' detention have been banned from leaving the country, Morning Star News reported. The two face no additional charges.

Yat Michael, 49, and Peter Yein Reith, 36, were preparing to board a plane Aug. 6 with their families when Khartoum International Airport authorities stopped them, according to one of the men's attorneys. Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) ordered the ban when the pastors were initially detained — Yat on Dec. 14, 2014 and Reith on Jan. 11, 2015 — and gave the orders to the airport personnel, the attorney said.

A relative asked for prayer. "They have been prohibited from leaving Khartoum," the relative said, "but we are working now with their lawyer, and your prayers are very needed." The two men had been released after being acquitted of charges that could have garnered the death penalty, being convicted of lesser charges instead and given credit for time served.

The two pastors lead South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SSPEC) congregations. Michael had been arrested after encouraging Khartoum Bahri Evangelical Church, which had been the subject of government harassment, arrests, and

see PASTORS on p. 7

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

School time, prayer time

Kids are sad. Parents are elated. Lines are long, traffic is at a fever pitch, and patience is low, but that's all right. It's the back-to-school rush across most of Mississippi.

Tenderfoot parents are experiencing this phenomenon for the first time with both excitement and anxiety, while parents on the other end of the time line approach their final back-to-school week with -- you guessed it -- excitement and anxiety. We should say a prayer for all of them.

We should also pray for teachers and school administrators everywhere. So committed are they to their life mission that they are willing to forsake better salaries, waive better working conditions, and endure extreme pressure from all kinds of people and groups just to get the opportunity to educate our children. There are very few higher and more precious callings.

Many of those teachers and school administrators are Mississippi Baptists. Many of them pray for their peers and for the students with whom they are entrusted, ever mindful of the increasing legal and career ramifications for doing so in public. Many of them conducted prayer meetings and prayer walks in and around their schools over the past few weeks in preparation for the new school year, again mindful of the consequences. Some did so out of public view.

They need all the spiritual support they can get. In California, children as young as kindergarten are legally allowed to declare what they believe their gender to be -- male or female, the child gets to decide whether they are a boy or a girl regardless of anatomical facts. Refusal to follow this ridiculous mandate by a school board or principal or teacher can trigger a full-blown investigation by that state's attorney general.

In several hot spots around the country, battles rage between the true believers of evolution and proponents of intelligent design. Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons will be stripped of any spiritual meaning and school observances will be renamed "harvest festivals" and "winter celebrations." (Halloween, how-

ever, will still be allowed under its traditional name.)

Mentioning God is verboten, a violation of church and state separation under the bizarre arguments of liberal extremist groups like the ACLU. Judeo-Christian subjects are off-limits, while fringe "religions" are highlighted and celebrated. Christian student groups must get a federal court order to hold meetings at the school, while homosexual student groups are aggressively recruited and welcomed with open arms. Religious-themed clothing is not permissible, but the display of tongue piercings and pentagram T-shirts is constitutionally protected.

Lastly, for all the reasons above and for many, many more reasons, we should pray for the students. In the coming weeks and months of this new school year, even the most sheltered children will be bombarded with ideas and temptations that could not have been imagined just a generation ago -- public and private schools alike.

It's difficult enough to stem the constant flow of cultural sewage into our homes, but it's near impossible to control at school.

Our prayers for Christian students should be two-fold. First, we should pray that they will remain spiritually grounded and steadfast against the allure and bright lights in which the world wraps sin. We should pray that their discernment will be strong enough to avoid the snares and pitfalls they will encounter.

Secondly, we should pray without ceasing for their witness to non-believers. Although there are groups loudly advocating abandonment of what they call "God-less" schools, the clear command of our Savior is to take the Gospel to the world (Matthew 28:18-20). Pray that Christian students will remain faithful to this most important mission when confronted by determined adversaries, and pray that the Lord will allow you to be their strong supporter and a shining example to light their path.

It's a big, lost world out there, and our responsibility is to spread the message of Jesus Christ wherever we go. Let's get busy.

Hopeful for the future

The size and complexity of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) often makes it the recipient of unfair criticism. I believe there are reasons why you can be hopeful about our convention today and for the future. This does not mean there are not issues to be addressed. As SBC president, I am privileged to be involved in matters across our convention. Yes, some things need attention and change but today, I want to focus on four reasons why you can be hopeful about the SBC:

■ *Our conversation today is about fulfilling the Great Commission more effectively.* For the past five to six years, our conversation as a convention has become focused on the right thing: Presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations. Our convention is focused on this grand effort and is working at both the state and national levels on how we can best assist our churches in their God-assigned task of reaching the world for Jesus Christ.

■ *Our convictions today are setting us apart from many others.* Due to our two-decade-long and needed battle over what we believe about Holy Scripture, our SBC today is not warring over the cultural issues that are dividing so many denominations. Why? Because we believe the Bible is the Word of God, and we believe it together. While many denominations are signaling to the culture an uncertainty about many of these issues and even warring internally about them, we stand with clarity and unity. Thank God for our pastors and churches that are faithful to Scripture and courageous in their convictions. Because this is where our churches are, our Southern Baptist leaders can stand emboldened in this challenging hour.

■ *Our convention today is becoming younger in age and more ethnically diverse.* If you were present in Columbus, Oh., at our 2015 convention, you saw how much younger we are and how much more diverse we are becoming ethnically. This should encourage each of us greatly. What is happening nationally in our convention will occur eventually in your state convention. Perhaps it is happening already. It needs to occur in our churches. The future depends upon it. Fifty-eight percent of the new churches we planted in North America last year were non-Anglo churches. Prayerfully, this will continue to increase. With our focus on



Guest opinion
with Ronnie Floyd

church planting nationally and internationally, we will see a younger and more diverse audience increase.

■ *Our recent experiences are leading us to a growing hope.* Since being elected SBC president, I have tried to call us to extraordinary prayer for the next Great Spiritual Awakening in America. The most recent convention in Columbus exemplified this in many ways, where thousands joined us in prayer during the Tuesday night session for the next Great Awakening and to Reach the World for Christ. In fact, I believe the entire convention, along with the ministries, meetings, and conferences that preceded it were highly positive and hopeful experiences. Then, as 13,000 of us gathered this past week in Nashville focusing on living our lives on mission with God, it was evident that God is working. What we saw and experienced in our SEND Conference in Nashville is the coming SBC where the arena is filled with enthusiasm and life, abounding in young adults and ethnic diversity.

Therefore, be encouraged. If you missed the 2015 Southern Baptist Convention, watch this recap video here. If you missed the SEND North America Conference this week in Nashville, you can watch the recap at vimeo.com/133792917.

Each have their distinct purpose, but this is what we are doing together. Be encouraged. Dear friends, though I am increasingly hopeful about our present and our future, my eyes are not blind to reality. While I believe so passionately in our hope for the future, I am just as burdened by:

- Descent in evangelism and baptisms.
- Lack of contagious and sacrificial giving in funding our mission to reach the world for Christ
- Minimization of the need for extraordinary prayer and the power of God

see FLOYD on p. 6

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Editor
William H. Perkins Jr.
wperkins@mbcb.org

Associate Editor
Tony Martin
martin@mbcb.org

Layout/Design
Megan Young
myoung@mbcb.org

Advertising
Dana Richardson
drichardson@mbcb.org

Circulation Manager
Amy Massey
amassey@mbcb.org

Baptist Record
Advisory Committee:
Camille Anding, Etta
T.R. Darsey, Winona
Whit Lewis, New Albany
Derrick Wilson, Kosciusko
Carolyn Reeves, Oxford
Garland Boyd, Brookhaven

Postmaster:
Send changes of
address to: The Baptist
Record, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS
39205-0530.

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to: The Editor, Baptist
Record, P.O. Box 530,
Jackson, MS
39205-0530.

Tel: (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org



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Pro-life Dems fighting Planned Parenthood

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — To win enough Democratic support to become law, proposals to defund Planned Parenthood must emphasize the transfer of funds to other women's health care providers rather than the mere removal of money from America's largest abortion provider, according to a pro-life group within the Democratic Party.

Democrats for Life of America, a Washington-based group that works to elect pro-life Democrats to public office, also said a push to transfer Planned Parenthood's funding should follow a congressional investigation of the abortion giant and target Democratic House and Senate members in districts with few or no Planned Parenthood clinics.

"Planned Parenthood is not the only game in town," said Kristen Day, executive director of Democrats for Life of America. "They're not the only providers of health care for women, especially for low-income women."

Some 9,000 government-backed community health centers provide women's health services without performing abortions, "are more readily available," and "are not just focused in big cities" like the 700 U.S. Planned Parenthood clinics, she said.

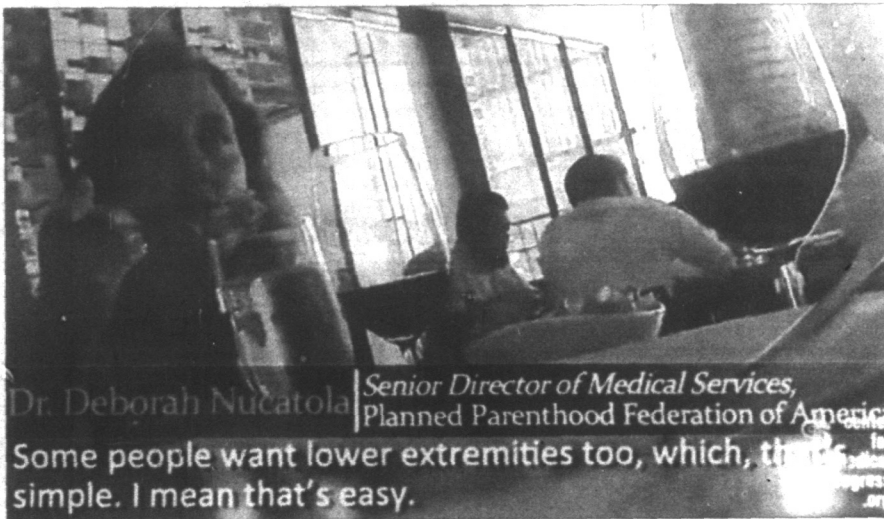
Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates receive over \$500 million in taxpayer subsidies each year.

Informing legislators

Some Democrats may vote to transfer Planned Parenthood's funding to community health centers, Day told Baptist Press, if they are informed about community health centers and if House and Senate leadership bring the transfer of funds to a vote following a congressional investigation of Planned Parenthood.

"Getting that message out to Democrats is the way to defund Planned Parenthood," Day said. "... If you offer solutions and say, 'Listen, we don't want to cut off funds to women,' by transferring the money to community health centers, you'll be more likely to get more votes" in Congress.

A Republican-sponsored bill under consideration in the Senate takes a similar approach to the strategy promoted by Democrats for Life, recommending the transfer of Planned Parenthood funds to other health care options for women — but Day criticized Republicans



Dr. Deborah Nucatola | Senior Director of Medical Services, Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Some people want lower extremities too, which, that's simple. I mean that's easy.

BUSINESS TALK — Deborah Nucatola, a physician and senior director of medical services for Planned Parenthood Federal of America, casually discusses over lunch the crushing, dismemberment, and sale of body parts of unborn babies. She was captured in first of a series of undercover videos released by the Center for Medical Progress in Irvine, Ca., which is "a group of citizen journalists ... concerned about contemporary bioethical issues that impact human dignity," according to the group's web site. (Special photo courtesy of Center for Medical Progress)

for not accompanying their bill with a sufficiently rigorous public relations campaign emphasizing the continued provision of health services for women.

Good targets

Democratic House and Senate members in some 30 states with fewer than 10 Planned Parenthood clinics are "good targets" for pro-life lobbying, Day said. She proposed asking such Democrats, "Where do you want the tax dollars going? Do you want them going to other states, or do you want to bring them home to yours?"

North Dakota, for example, which has one Democratic senator, has no Planned Parenthood clinics and 16 community health centers, Day said. Rhode Island, with two Democratic senators, has one Planned Parenthood clinic and 45 community health centers. Hawaii, also with two Democratic senators, has two Planned Parenthood clinics and 74 community health centers.

In the House, some legislators' districts do not have any Planned Parenthood clinics even though there are clinics in their states. Day cited Nevada as an example, where both local Planned Parenthood clinics are in Las Vegas.

Mississippi has only one licensed abortion clinic, located on State Street in Jackson, and it is not known to be affiliated

with Planned Parenthood. An Internet search turned up Planned Parenthood facilities on Capital Street in Jackson and 27th Avenue in Hattiesburg, but those facilities refer women seeking abortions to out-of-state Planned Parenthood clinics.

The challenge

Getting Democrats in either house of Congress to support a bill defunding Planned Parenthood will be a challenge. Baptist Press queried the 10 Democrats on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee regarding their willingness to support a withdrawal of funds from Planned Parenthood. Nine did not respond, and the one who did — pro-life Pennsylvania Sen. Bob Casey — said he will support continued federal funding of Planned Parenthood even after the Center for Medical Progress released videos showing Planned Parenthood employees discussing the sale of baby body parts.

"If any individuals involved in fetal tissue donation at Planned Parenthood are determined to have violated the law, then they should be prosecuted," Casey said in written comments. "According to Planned Parenthood none of its facilities in Pennsylvania are engaged in fetal tissue donation, and I hope other chapters across the nation would discontinue the practice."

"I will continue to support Title X funding for family planning and contraception, including funds that go to Planned Parenthood, because these programs reduce unintended pregnancies and, as a result, reduce the number of abortions. Planned Parenthood facilities provide vital services, like cervical and breast cancer screenings and primary health care, to millions of low-income women and it's important that those services continue."

Correct strategy

Richard Land, former president of Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville and currently president of the independent Southern Evangelical Seminary in Matthews, N.C., told Baptist Press that Democrats for Life's idea to target Democrats in states with few Planned Parenthood clinics "is probably a correct strategy."

"Planned Parenthood not only gets over half a billion dollars a year from the federal treasury," Land said, "they give an enormous amount of money to Democratic candidates for office and that symbiotic relationship makes it difficult for Democratic candidates for office and Democratic officeholders to be willing to go on record as opposing continued federal funding for Planned Parenthood."

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Richard Land

president of Southern Evangelical Seminary

History

The root of Democrats' pro-choice leanings extends back to 1972, Land said, when Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern began to lead the party in a liberal direction away from its more moderate establishment. In 1964, Republican presidential nominee Barry Goldwater led his party in a conservative direction away from its moderate establishment.

As a result, by the mid-1970s the two parties had become more ideologically polarized than ever.

By 1980, the Republican Party had embraced pro-lifers partly in an effort to build a large enough coalition to survive following the Watergate scandal.

The Democratic Party had become dominated by the "McGovernites, who were progressive on every issue — the abortion issue [and] virtually every issue of the sexual revolution," said Land.

The leftward drift of the Democratic Party on social issues seemed to contribute to Democratic presidential hopefuls like Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Richard Gephardt, and Jesse Jackson switching from pro-life to pro-choice views, Land added.

To stem the pro-choice tide of the Democratic Party enough to defund Planned Parenthood, "public outrage would have to reach a critical mass," Land said, noting that the series of videos released by the Center for Medical Progress "may do it."

It was the most traumatic and in some ways chaotic day most Americans had ever spent — September 11, 2001. In a multiplicity of ways, all our worlds changed. Throughout the day we watched and re-watched as the planes flew into an explosion at the World Trade Towers in New York City. Soon we heard that there was a plane that was crashed in Pennsylvania and another that went into the Pentagon. What in the world is happening?

As the events of that day and that week and that month and that long, sad, smoky period of our national existence continued, we realized that nearly 3,000 of our fellow citizens had died as the towers collapsed, as the Pentagon was damaged and partly burned, and as a planeload of courageous people went down in Shanksville. Right there before our eyes, people were jumping from over 100 stories high to escape the flames and probably sudden death in the fires. Three thousand. All the rest of us who began to hear what had happened, that we had been attacked, were thrown into an emotional state and a mental uncertainty that we had never faced before. These many years later, one lady was telling me that she did not sleep day nor night for four days. It was chaotic and we as a nation began to rise up to say, "We will do something about this."

In our minds, watching the planes going into the Twin Towers in New York or learning of the stories on the planes and in the places where the other crashes took place — the Pentagon, the field in Pennsylvania — those places quickly became hallowed ground and remain clear in our thinking. As chaotic as it was, 9-11 has by the march of time been put into a new perspective not only because we survived those days but because generations of new births have taken place and have come to live among us not fully understanding the importance or the trauma of that day. I suppose from their parents and grandparents they will hear stories about 9-11 as they hear about that incredible day in December 1941 at Pearl Harbor, but for many of them it will only be a note of history and maybe an answer to a test question. I do believe, though, that it will take several more decades before the chaos of that one day fails to find people whose emotions are not still stirred.



From Chaotic to Quiet

One of the reasons why that day is so important is because in one small time frame, with instant and worldwide news coverage, we witnessed almost 3,000 innocent Americans just going to work in the process of doing their daily activities have their lives snuffed out. It was and is worthy of our attention and our outrage.

Contrast that with the events that take place each and every day across our country, as on average about 3,000 babies are taken from their mothers' wombs, aborted. That's every day times 365 on average for about a million and a quarter children who will not live. Since 1973's U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, the number of children that have been aborted here in America is somewhere past the 55 million mark. On the part of the mainstream media and so many people across the land, the response is silence.

The babies have no voice. Many people are silent because they have chosen that way (abortion) to not have a child, and others simply shrug their shoulders and say, "Well, it's the law of the land and there's nothing I can do or say about it." So, quiet often reigns.

Just recently one of the lead providers of abortions in America, Planned Parenthood, was exposed by a visual and sound presentation recorded at a lunch. The conversation around the table while they nibbled on their salads was related to how these aborted children's body parts are "harvested" and sold to be used for medical reasons or scientific experimentation. For years

this mass of cells removed from the mother's womb was simply called a fetus and was not a person, but now we know that many of those performing the abortions were very careful to keep the body intact — the head, the chest — because the organs — heart, lungs, brain — were extremely valuable if they were not crushed.

While the conversation continued about this horrific topic, the lunch continued as these smart, sophisticated folks discussed extracting and using those body parts. If you have not seen this series of videos, if for no other reason than to open your eyes and see the desensitized condition of the American public, you need to watch it. More importantly, this process needs to be stopped.

Planned Parenthood decades ago was thought of as a means of helping people to plan their families so they could take care of their children and provide for them. Planned Parenthood quickly became the option for offering abortion to women in the name of reproductive rights. Planned Parenthood has been the recipient of millions upon millions of tax dollars in order to accomplish their purposes, and now by these videos the world has had the opportunity to sit in on seeing and hearing the business they are about.

Sadly, truthfully, in large measure, the silence continues. Across the board, the bulk of national news media is more interested in the incredible things that Donald Trump is saying or the things

that Hillary is not saying than they are in the tens of millions of children whose lives have been snuffed out and their remains used for some strange scientific application. What can you, one person, do about this national tragedy? We cannot bring back the 55 million children that have been aborted, but there are some things we can do.

First of all, I would encourage you to recognize the shift in mindset and values in our nation that has allowed us to actually believe that human beings are of little worth. The supreme expression of God's creation is now treated by many as though it has no value. The value of human life is not simply a good thing. It is a God thing. The child in the womb, all the way to that precious senior adult struggling with life in hospice care, is a great concern to God and of incredible worth to Him. We need to instill that fact in our children and recapture it in our own lives.

Secondly, you and I can pray that God Almighty would work in our lives to reestablish Him to His exalted position, and that His incredible, unchanging Word be our first thought related to any national issue. We who were once People of the Book have seen our nation slip into being people who just drift into the accommodations that come with a cultural mindset. It is almost as though we have embraced the idea that truth is what everybody's doing. No, truth is what God says about what everybody's doing.

Third and in a very practical way, you can let especially our national leaders — your senator, your representative, those who pass the budget for our national funding — know that groups like Planned Parenthood should not be supported by your tax dollars.

The outrage that no doubt will come from people who want to defend a woman's reproductive rights needs to be overcome by the voices of those who believe a precious child being formed in the womb of a mother also has a say about his or her future. Let's break the silence and let our voices be heard in heaven and on earth.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

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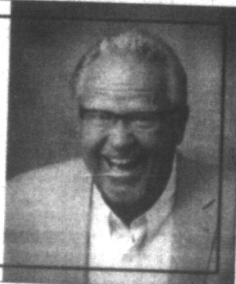
Guest Speaker:

Dennis Swanberg, "The Swan,"
America's Minister of Encouragement

August 24 | 6:30 p.m.

Doors open at 6 pm. Suggested \$10 love offering received at the door.

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JONES COUNTY BIBLE CONFERENCE

AUGUST 23-25, 2015

SALEM HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH | LAUREL, MS

SPEAKERS

DR. JOHN SULLIVAN

SUN. AUG. 23 - 10:15 A.M.

MON. AUG. 24 - 12:00 P.M.

TUE. AUG. 25 - 12:00 P.M.

DR. ROBERT SMITH

SUN. AUG. 23 - 6:00 P.M.

DR. JEFF LABORG

MON. AUG. 24 - 6:30 P.M.

DR. TED TRAYLOR

TUES. AUG. 25 - 6:30 P.M.

MUSIC

Each evening session will be led by a choir combining the talents of each participating church.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

During each evening session, a worship service will be provided for all children K - 6th grade.

MIDDAY SERVICES

12:00 - 1:00 p.m. at SHBC - Come when you can; leave when you must.

601-763-7571 | WWW.SALEMHEIGHTS.ORG

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

August 13, 2015

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

BSU

WEEKLY MEETING SCHEDULE | 2015-16

All events are in the BSU Centers, unless otherwise noted.

BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
Noonday - Mon - 1:00pm, Thurs - 12:35pm
Prime Time Worship - every other Tues - 7:00pm

CO-LIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Praise/Worship - Mon - 6:15pm
Dawn Bible Studies - Tues - 8:00pm
Chapel - Wed - 11:00am

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Focus Worship & Bible Study - Mon - 6:30pm
Lunch/Encounter Bible Study - Wed - Noon

EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Worship - Mon - 8:31pm
Lunch Encounter - Wed - Noon

EAST MS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Free Lunch & Bible Study - Mon - Noon
Worship - Tues - 7:00pm
Dawn Bible Studies - Wed - 7:00pm

Golden Triangle Campus
Free Lunch & Bible Study - Wed - 11:45am

GULF COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Jeff Davis Campus
Free Lunch - Tues - 12:30pm

Jackson County Campus
Free Lunch - Tues - 12:20pm
Free Lunch - Wed - Noon

Perkinson Campus
Free Lunch - Tues - 12:30pm

HINDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Worship - Tues - 7:00pm
Lunch - Thurs - 12:30pm
Small Group Bible Study - Thurs - TBA

HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Goodman Campus
Worship & Bible Study - Tues - 7:00pm
Lunch & Devotion - Thurs - 11:45am

Granada Campus
Lunch & Devotion - Wed - Noon

Ridgeland Campus
Focus Factor - Wed - Noon

ITAWAMBA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Worship - Mon - 7:07 pm
Luncheon - Wed - 12:07pm

JONES COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE
Worship - Tues - 6:00pm
NOONDAY lunch - Wed - 11:00am - 1:00pm

MERIDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Noonday - Wed - Chapel - 11:15am & 12:30pm
Arise (Worship) - Mon - Chapel - 7:14pm

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE
Vision Worship - Mon - FBC Activities Bldg - 6:30pm
Community Missions - Wed - 3:30pm

MISSISSIPPI DELTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Worship - Mon - 6:30pm
Noonday Lunch & Devotion - Wed - 12:20pm

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
Priority - Tues - Bible Study & Worship - 6:15pm
Noonday - Wed - Lunch & Bible Study - Noon

MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN
Noonday Lunch & Devotional - Thurs - 12:30pm

NORTHEAST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Morning Devotion - Wed - 7:20am
Worship - Wed - 8:00pm
Bible Study Luncheon - Wed & Thurs - 11:30am

NORTHWEST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Worship & Bible Study - Tues - 7pm
DeSoto Center - Free Lunch & Bible Study - Wednesday - Noon

PEARL RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Worship - Mon - 6:33pm
Lunch Encounter - Thurs - 11:00am
Lunch/Encounter - Wed - Noon - Hattiesburg Campus

SOUTHWEST MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Worship/Bible Study - Mon - 7:00pm
Noonday Lunch - Wed - 11:15am

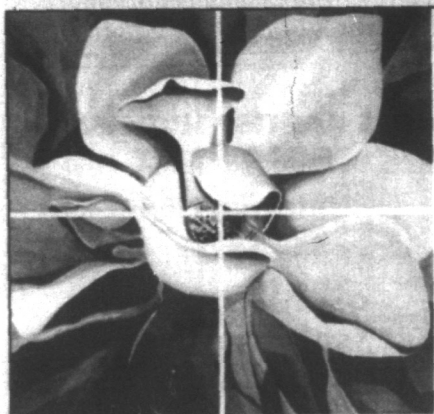
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI
Main Event Worship - Tues - 7:00pm
Fresh Start/Freshmen - TBA
Transfers - Thurs - 7:00pm

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
7:01pm - Mon - Worship & Bible Study
12:01pm - Thurs - Lunch & Devotion

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY
Campus LINK - Mon - Student Conf Center - 7:45pm
Priority Lunch - Tues - Student Conf Center - Noon
Prayer Breakfast - Fri - BSU Center - 9:25am

Baptist Student Union is the Mississippi Baptist ministry to our college campuses provided by your Cooperative Program gifts.

For more information, contact the Collegiate Ministry Department, 1-800-748-1651.



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JANUARY BIBLE STUDY PREVIEW

SEPTEMBER 8, 2015
BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE,
BLUE MOUNTAIN

SEPTEMBER 29, 2015
GARAYWA CAMP &
CONFERENCE CENTER,
CLINTON

SEPTEMBER 15, 2015
WILLIAM CAREY UNIV.,
HATTIESBURG

Leaders:

Blue Mountain - Ronald Meeks
William Carey - Daniel Caldwell
Garaywa - Wayne VanHorn

Provided by your Cooperative Program and your
 Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
 Sunday School & Small Groups Team, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205
 If you need more information or assistance with registration, contact
 Carolyn Day, 1-800-748-1651, Ext. 291 or 601-292-3291, cday@mbcb.org



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STRONG
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• A ONE OF A KIND EVENT

- Dr. Chuck Lawless
 - The Power of Small
 - Guarding The Heart for Effective Ministry
 - Outside the Walls
 - Groups Matter

• The "take aways" will be awesome!

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 • First Baptist Church, Jackson
www.mbc.org/smallstrong

REGISTRATION

In order to accommodate the participants, advance registration is important. To register go to www.mbc.org/smallstrong and select REGISTER. The cost is \$20 per person. Those who register before August 1 will receive a 30% discount. Pastors who bring their Deacon Chairman may register the chairman at no costs to the church by selecting DEACON [special conditions apply] at www.mbc.org/smallstrong.

If getting online is a problem - call Carolyn Day, 601-292-3291 or 1-800-748-1651, Extension 291, and she will process your registration on your behalf.

CONTACT THE SUNDAY SCHOOL/SMALL GROUPS DEPT. 800-748-1651, Ext. 291

ANNUAL MISSIONS CELEBRATION

WMU ANNUAL MEETING AND MISSIONS LEADERSHIP TRAINING

For more information contact the WMU Office:
 at the MBCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 323.

NSSDS REGISTRATION 2015 NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR SEMINAR SEPTEMBER 26, 2015 • CLINTON, MS

Cost per person: \$39 Registration Options:

1. Complete and photocopy this form for your records. Send original with check made payable to LifeWay Christian Resources and mail in a stamped envelope to: LifeWay Christian Resources - NSSDS, PO Box 24001, Nashville, TN 37202.
2. Register online: lifeway.com/nssds
3. Or call: 800.254.2022

Additional information regarding schedule and directions to the seminar location can be found at lifeway.com/nssds.

To assist churches in making this training available to their directors, the Mississippi Baptist Convention will provide a post seminar reimbursement [one person per church] of \$19 which is 1/2 the registration cost. Payment made to the church or person that paid the registration fee.

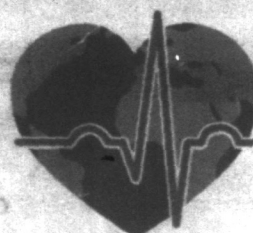
Send registration receipt to:
 Carolyn Day, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

For more information contact the Sunday School/Small Groups Department of the MBCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 291, or 601-292-3291, or E-mail cday@mbcb.org

2015 STATE SENIOR RALLY THURSDAY, AUGUST 27 CROSSGATES BC, BRANDON [\$1 AT THE DOOR]

Featuring: Jenny Nolen, Purvis

For more information contact the Discipleship/Family Ministry Dept. of the MBCB at 601-292-3284.



BAPTIST NURSING
 FELLOWSHIP

MS BAPTIST NURSING FELLOWSHIP

"Drawing Near"

October 16-17, 2015

Garaywa Camp &
 Conference Center

Program fee \$15 (includes CEU fee). There are additional fees for housing and meals.

Friday: 5:00 p.m. Registration 6:00 p.m., Dinner 7:00 p.m. Worship	Saturday: 8:00 a.m. Breakfast 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Worship & Breakout Sessions No lunch meal served
--	---

To register: You call/E-mail Tammy Anderson for a registration form or download a form at www.mbc.org (go to events and select MS BNF Retreat to find the form). **Deadline to register is October 2, 2015.** No refunds after October 2. Substitutions will be allowed.

For more information please contact Tammy Anderson in the MS WMU office at 601-292-3323 or E-mail tanderson@mbcb.org.



SEPTEMBER 14-15
HYATT PLACE CONFERENCE ROOM
RIDGELAND, MS

The Christian Action Commission will host the American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP) annual meeting. ACAP is a federation of 37 states that believes education and public policy can reduce alcohol and drug related problems: death, dependency, disease, delinquency (including crime), dollars spent (economic cost), and disruption of family life and society.

This meeting provides speakers on these issues and also provides a platform where likeminded persons can address these issues with a united voice. Individuals and organizations that share these concerns are encouraged to attend.

For more information or to register contact:
 Christian Action Commission at 601-292-3329



Mother Daughter OVERNIGHT

Mother/Daughter is on October 16-17 2015 at Garaywa Camp & Conference Center. We will begin at 5 p.m. on Friday and end at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday. You will be involved in events such as a missionary visit, worship, ropes course, crafts and much more. This is the perfect opportunity to get away from the world and invest in a 1st-6th grade girl in your life.

Registration forms are online at garaywa.org.

Cost= \$50 per person

Please call Garaywa Camp & Conference Center at 601-924-7034 for more information. Sponsored by the Women's Missionary Union.

GROUPSMATTER.

We will be in all areas of our state to equip your Sunday School and Small Groups church leadership from pastors to preschool with tools for teaching Jesus as the Christ.

2015 Sunday School and Small Groups Leadership Conferences
6:30-8:30 p.m.

To view the full listing of conferences visit:
http://www.mbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/groupsmatterschedule_web4.pdf



Mississippi Baptist Convention Board
 Sunday School and Small Groups Team



MISSISSIPPI MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP

Saturday, September 19, 2015
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
 Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, Clinton, MS



MISSISSIPPI MISSIONARY PARENTS FELLOWSHIP

Friday-Saturday, September 18-19, 2015
2:00 p.m. Friday - 12:30 p.m. Saturday
 Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, Clinton, MS

For registration and more information contact Paula Smith,
 WMU - 601-292-3336, E-mail psmith@mbcb.org



October 24, 2015
Mississippi College, Clinton, MS
 Registration - noon • Program - 1:00 p.m. • Game - 3:00 p.m.
 Contact Men's Ministry at 800-748-1651, Ext. 335

44th ANNUAL CHURCH LIBRARY MINISTRY CONFERENCE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CORINTH, MS
 OCTOBER 2-3, 2015

Visit us Online at
<http://www.mbc.org/businessservices/communication-services/church-library-ministry/>

Register Online at:
<https://secure-q.net/EventQ/EventID=MBBaptistConv&EventID=1596>
 Contact Communication Services for more information at 800-748-1651, Ext. 378, or 601-292-3378, E-mail jchen@mbcb.org

Pray this day for..

August 14 – 27, 2015

"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."
Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

Pray for: **Richard & Martha Beal**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through financial administration, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Laurie Bledsoe**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kaye Brooks**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Donald & Donna Brown**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Karen Brown**, missionary ministering to American Peoples through nursing.

Pray for: **John & Claudia Brown**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Matthew Burks**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through evangelism.

Pray for: **David & Pamela Carlton**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach & evangelism.

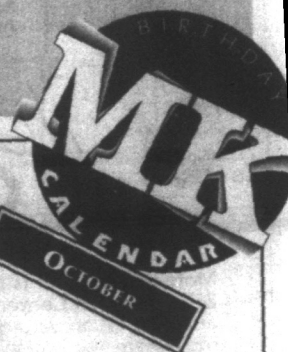
Pray for: **Richard & Wanda Clark**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Rebekah Clark**, missionary ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through youth evangelism.

Pray for: **Guy & Cindy Demars**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through hospitality coordination, church planting & community outreach.

Pray for: **Thomas & Kerri Dewett**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM DINNER

THURSDAY | AUGUST 20 | 6:30 P.M.

North Greenwood Baptist Church, Greenwood

PASTORS, STAFF, CHAIRMAN OF DEACONS,
FINANCIAL/BUDGET CHAIRMEN AND SPOUSES

DR. FUTRAL, SPEAKER

NO COST, BUT YOU MUST RSVP TO LISA LEAVELL AT 601-292-3347
OR LLEAVELL@MBCB.ORG BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 14.

RICK BLYTHE, DIRECTOR OF CP/STEWARDSHIP PROMOTION

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT THE
STEWARDSHIP/CP PROMOTION DEPT. OF THE MBCB AT
800-748-1651, EXT. 347, OR 601-292-3347.

10/1/04
MISS MAGGIE M.
Parents: C & A
Restricted

10/2/01
MISS SHELBY COX
Parents: Jeremy &
Kimberly
Restricted

10/3/97
MISS KARISSA
Parents: T & J
Restricted

10/4/01
MISS MICAH
Parents: Charlie &
Shannon
European Peoples

10/08/97
MISS ARIANNA
Parents: D & K
European Peoples

10/8/97
MISS CATHERINE
HODGINS
Parents: Ray & Cindy
Deaf Peoples Affinity
Group

10/24/2011
CHARLOTTE (CHARLIE)
MARIE
Parents: James and
Mary Margaret
Sub-Saharan African
Peoples

Encourage an MK with a card!

PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING: Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!

NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

HOUSE TOPS

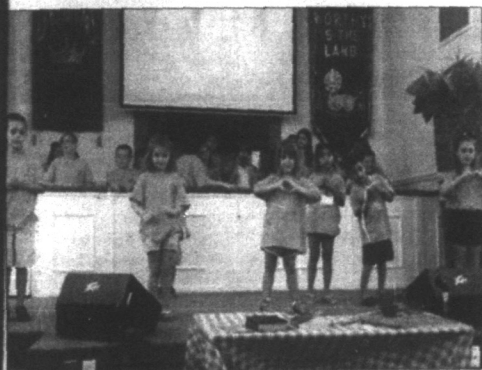
Vacation Bible School



NEW HOPE CHURCH, WALNUT GROVE: July 13 - 17; average attendance, 110.



NORTH RIPLEY CHURCH, BENTON-TIPPAH ASSOCIATION: July 24 - 25.



FIRST CHURCH, BOYLE: June 13 - 17; \$533 offering for the Baptist Children's Village.



FARMHAVEN CHURCH, CANTON: Shown are the participants.



BRANCH CHURCH, MORTON: Adult VBS; the church recorded 70 in attendance for their VBS.



FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, STARKVILLE: students and workers.



SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION: enrollment, 110 children, 64 leaders/workers, one salvation; mission offering, \$1795.22. Lisa Jones, director; Rusty Fair, pastor.



LENA CHURCH, LENA: Shown are the participants.



NORTH UNION CHURCH, ATTALA ASSOCIATION: July 20 - 22; Ladell Blanton, pastor.



SAND HILL CHURCH, ELLISVILLE: July 20 - 24.

SEND

cont. from p. 1

Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, reminded the audience Tuesday morning that ordinary people in the book of Acts witnessed God do extraordinary things through godly obedience.

"If you were picking teams, you would not have picked them," Pitman said of the early church. "They were former prostitutes. They were cheating tax collectors. They were salty former fishermen. They had no creativity. They had no strategy. They had no education. They had no formal training. They had no seminary degrees, and none of them had preached sermons. They weren't professional ministers. They had no influence. They had no relevance. They had no money. They had no power. They had no facilities."

"Within 40 years [after Pentecost], the Gospel had reached every part of the known world," Pitman said. "What if within 40 years of this moment, there were no unreached peoples left?"

During the two days of the Send Conference, more than 30 breakout sessions, some with thousands in attendance, challenged participants to consider practical next steps coming out of the experience.

More than 1,100 participants had already responded by Wednesday, primarily through the Send Conference app, requesting information or assistance for next steps in a life on mission.

To explore a connection with one of 32 Send North America cities, consider a Catch the Vision Tour and go to namb.net/catch-the-vision. For the latest on next steps with the Send North America Strategy, consider attending a Sending Church Lab. Learn more at sendnetwork.com/sending-church-lab. For information about connecting with International Mission Board opportunities, visit imb.org.

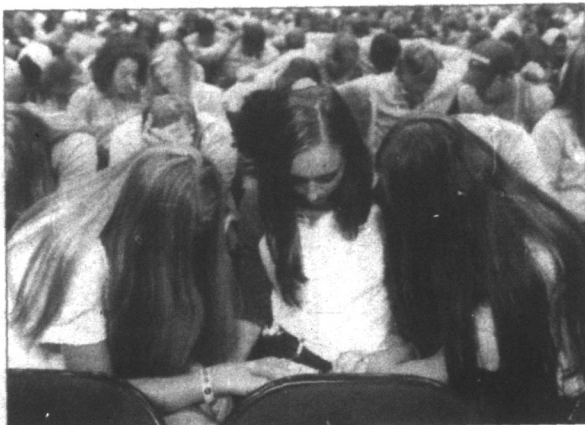
A set of life on mission next steps resources is now available, including a six-week Bible study by church planter Matt Rogers with corresponding videos, blog posts, and other items released on a weekly basis. Visit sendnetwork.com/lifeonmission for more details.

FLOYD

cont. from p. 2

These begin in the local churches that comprise the SBC. Somehow, some way, we need to prioritize these matters more than ever before in our churches and the result will be a robust explosion in our churches in reaching the world for Christ together. Now is the time to lead.

Floyd is SBC president and senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for length and style.



THE CENTERPIECE — Prayer opened the 2015 Send North America Conference. More than 13,000 people from all 50 states and four Canadian provinces flooded into Nashville's Bridgestone Arena to celebrate the call of Jesus on their lives and discover a life on mission. (BP photo courtesy of NAMB)

MS POSITIONS

SMITHVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENT MINISTER. Please send resume to Smithville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 52, Smithville, MS 38870.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SUMRALL, MISS., SEEKS FULL-TIME MINISTER TO CHILDREN/DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES. Bachelor's degree required (seminary preferred); prior experience working with children and in congregational or organizational setting required (experience as children's minister or equivalent preferred). Send resume and cover letter to office@fbcsumrall.org.

EASTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH IN INDIANOLA, MS, IS IN SEARCH OF A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 466, Indianola, MS 38751 or e-mail to Shirley Betts at s.betts@bellsouth.net.

GUNTER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLORENCE, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please submit resumes to Gunter Road Search Committee C/O Craig Dukes 2209 Woodland Place Florence, MS 39073 or rdukes@bellsouth.net.

THE COLLABORATIVE MISSIONARY NETWORK, FORMERLY MARSHALL AND LAFAYETTE ASSOCIATIONS, IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR. Send resumes to PO Box 422, Oxford, MS 38655 or lafasn@bellsouth.net.

OAK HILL CHURCH IN MERIDIAN IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME CHURCH SECRETARY. Send resume to P.O. Box 3938, Meridian, MS 39303.

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH, ROXIE IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 550 Hamburg Rd., Roxie, MS 39661.

BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE AREA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN, COMPASSIONATE CHURCH SECRETARY with a minimum of 1 year experience performing general office work. Excellent computer knowledge and telephone skills will be a plus. Resumes will ONLY be accepted by mail: Search Committee, 510 Lake Valley Drive, Starkville, MS 39759 or by e-mail: sr_parks@bellsouth.net

CLASSIFIEDS

ILLINOIS BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME SEEKS AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO REPLACE CURRENT DIRECTOR'S RETIREMENT THE END OF 2016. Applications are to be received by January 2016 to fill the position by October 2016. Go to www.bchfs.com/employment.html for details.

YOUNG CHANG SEMI-CONCERT GRAND PIANO (6' 10"). Played very little. Black glossy. Great piano. Asking \$7,500. Please call Larry at 862-871-8039 for more info. (Moved-no room for it)

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BIBL i O C I P H E R

T GAJAAQZ KXM SZANACXNA,
GNASZNAB, GK SZA LANQTAJ XC YXE,
SZDS KA ONAJABS KXMN GXETAJ D
VTITBY JDQNTCTQA, ZXVK,
DQQAOSDGVA MBSX YXE, FZTQZ TJ
KXMN NADJXBDGVA JANITQA.

NXLDBJ SFAVIA: XBA

Clue: G = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 8:12

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

Revivals & Homecomings



During homecoming at **NEW HENLEYFIELD CHURCH, CARRIERE**, pastor Ray Allen presented a plaque to Betty Burks, a charter member of the church for her years of service. Rick and Sandra Daigle, her daughter and son-in-law, accepted the plaque.

► **Macedonia Church, Meridian:** Revival, Aug. 16 - 19; Charles Davis, speaker; Paul Bld., S., music; Virgil Walters, pastor.

► **Rolling Creek Church, Quitman:** 100th anniversary, Aug. 15 - 16; Sat., open house, 4 - 6 p.m., followed by congregational singing and specials from former music ministers, former and current members, and descendants of the church founders. Sun., 10 a.m., with former pastors speaking, followed by old fashioned dinner. Ronnie Copper, pastor.

► **Short Creek Church, Yazoo City:** Homecoming, Aug. 16; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch.

► **Galilee First Church, Gloster:** 191st homecoming, Aug. 16; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch. Thomas Wicker, pastor.



During the 121st homecoming of **CORINTH CHURCH, HEIDELBURG**, pastor Jamie Matthews presented a plaque to Debbie Cross in honor of her service as pianist for 55 years.

Redeeming Judgment • Revelation 9:1-12

How do you respond when a frightening circumstance presents itself? Some people tend to overreact, disturb others around them and make the situation even worse. Some shut down and refuse to either take into account the seriousness of the moment or become paralyzed with inactivity. Yet, there are those precious others when fear seeks to enter their hearts or minds they resolve to trust God no matter what.

I am reminded of a little boy who left his shoes on the back porch. His mother had asked him repeatedly throughout the day to retrieve the shoes and bring them in. Darkness fell and it was now bedtime. Once again, the mother instructed the boy to get the shoes. The child was scared of going outside in the dark and refused to obey his mother. The mother, tired of his disobedience, decided to use the opportunity to teach the boy a lesson about the protection of God. She shared with her son there was no need to be afraid because God was out on the back porch and would protect him. To which the child replied, "Then tell God to bring the shoes in!"

There have been occasions in my life when I wanted God to do something on my behalf because I was fearful or anxious. We do not have to watch or listen to the news broadcasts for an extended amount

of time to realize we are living in uncertain times. With violence, senseless shootings, terrorist attacks from our own citizens and conflict abroad, one could choose fear for a way of life.

Many times while preparing to teach or preach, I find myself wishing there would have been a video camera available to help us see what the biblical authors were witnessing or experiencing. Revelation 9 is a good example of this. This chapter encapsulates

a picture of fear. Our last lesson together ended with chapter 5. For the benefit of context, take the time to read Revelation chapters 6-8 to get a better grasp on what is taking place in chapter 9. In Revelation 6, Jesus begins to open the seals on the scroll. The first four seals serve as instruments of judgment from God to indicate His wrath on the earth. The middle of chapter 6 shows God's love and assurance for martyred believers and the close of Revelation 6 reveals some of the

disasters on earth in light of God's judgment. Revelation 7 is an interlude before the opening of the seventh seal and God's acts of grace toward every tribe of Israel. Chapter 8 records the sounding of various trumpets and the disasters that followed. The punishments were severe, destroying a third of everything.

This brings us to Revelation 9 and the abyss (more commonly referred to as the bottomless pit). Locusts may not seem

like a big threat to us today, but in John's day they were a real threat. The locusts of John are portraying swarmed across large areas and

were agents of mass destruction. They robbed the land of needed crops and other vital plant life. This would pose not only an economic problem for the people, but a problem of food sources, starvation and possible poverty. A locust problem was a livelihood problem.

However, the locusts in Revelation 9 were not your typical locusts. Their tar-

get wasn't plant life or vegetation, it was people! Only two groups of people were exempt from the terrible torment of the locusts: the 144,000 Jewish evangelists mentioned in chapter 7 and their converts. Those without the seal of God on their foreheads were to be tormented for a period of 5 months (the normal life cycle of a locust). It is debated the nature of this seal. Some believe it to be the Holy Spirit while others believe it is indicative to the name of God.

The pain inflicted by the locusts were comparable to the stings from a scorpion. The pain would be so intense, many would seek death but not find it (Revelation 9:6). To give you a picture the devastation locusts could have, read Exodus 10:1-20 and Joel 1:1-12. This is one section of Scripture that closes abruptly and leaves little in the way of misunderstanding. However, even in a picture of torment as vivid as this one, God is merciful in that He allows us to know ahead of time of what is to come for those who refuse to trust in Him for salvation. Thus, we should be compelled to share the gospel. We are inching closer to the end of the book, hold on. The best is yet to come!

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.



Explore the Bible with Bobby McKay

Return to Unity • Acts 4:31-37

In 1988 I met a couple while serving with NAMB that would change how I viewed by possessions the rest of my life. Whenever and wherever they saw a need and they felt Holy Spirit led, they would give whatever resource they had to meet that need. Summer mission's team needs a car to drive around the state for revivals? "Here's one," they said. US-2 missionary here from Mississippi and needs friends and a hot meal? "Meet me at the Black-eyed Pea," they said. The most profound way their life spoke to me was when their niece and two nephews—all under the ages of 8 needed a home. "Here's your home," they said. They lived (and still live) their lives with a tight hold on eternity and a loose hold on their stuff. This profound and intentional lifestyle was much life the early church in today's lesson.

Christian Unity is Based on a Single Passion (Acts 4:31)

In verses 21-30 of chapter 4, Peter and John had been released from imprisonment for preaching and ministering in the name of Jesus. The Jerusalem church immediately prayed for continued boldness and Holy Spirit fueled power to continue advancing the Gospel. God replied immediately by sending the Holy Spirit as the place they were gathered was literally shaken. The spiritual aftershocks would impact those gathered as well as those they would

soon encounter as Luke reveals those gathered were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to proclaim the Gospel boldly. This first church was unified through their trials and in spite of societal pressure to remain silent.

Christian Unity Must be Gospel Based (Acts 4:32-33)

As these early believers were faithful to proclaim the Gospel, and Luke is intentional to include that they boldly proclaimed the resurrection (the primary source of the

Jew's disdain for the first Christians), they also were unified to the extent that they shared their belongings with one another. As a result of their faithfulness with the Gospel and faithfulness toward one another's needs, they received Holy Spirit empowerment and God's favor.

Christian Unity is Grounded in Unselfishness (Acts 4:34-37)

The unity these first believers shared around the bold advancement of the

Gospel also directly affected their personal lives. As needs within this local body of believers were recognized, those who had possessions would sell what they owned in order to meet another's needs. The example of Barnabas selling a piece of land he owned and bringing the proceeds as an offering to the apostles is a tangible demonstration of unselfishness for the sake of unity and a demonstration of love for a faith family and the advancement of the Gospel.

Walk

The unity of these first Christ followers should be motivation for us to see the power in a unified focus on

prayer and for the advancement of the Gospel. These first believers were single minded in their commitment to prayer for strength and boldness to advance the Gospel. Believers today should recalibrate their priorities around prayer and the Gospel. Pray daily and ask God to show you areas in your life where you can promote unity in the body.



Bible Studies for Life with Beth S. Bowman



Run

Today's believers must become bold-er in proclaiming the pure Gospel, even in the face of rising resistance. God was faithful to provide the first church with Holy Spirit power as they committed to proclaim the Gospel and this power is available to a Gospel unified church today. How is the Holy Spirit leading you? In what ways/areas can you surrender so that the church can boldly go forward?

Soar

Just as the initial Christ followers were committed to the cause of the Gospel to the extent that they sold possessions to provide for the needs of their fellow believers and for the needs of the faith community. Western believers today have such a tight grip on "their stuff" that this principal seems foreign and impractical. A faith family which would confess its tendency to hold its belongings too tightly and then sacrificially provide for one those in need and for Gospel advancement would, no doubt, experience Holy Spirit power and God's grace like the First Century church. What can you give away TODAY to bless God's people? Well, go do it.

Bowman is Minister of Connection, First Church, Brandon, and a speaker for women's events.

PASTORS

cont. from p. 1

demolition of part of its worship center as Muslim investors have tried to take it over.

Police beat and arrested 38 Christians from the church on Dec. 2, 2014, and fined most of them, releasing them later that

night. Reith had been arrested after submitting a letter from SSPEC leaders inquiring about the whereabouts of Michael. The pastors had also been charged with:

- Spying, punishable by death, life imprisonment, or prison and confiscation of property.

- Undermining the constitutional system, punishable by

death, life imprisonment, or imprisonment and confiscation of property.

- Disclosure and obtaining information and official documents, punishable by two years in prison or a fine.

- Blasphemy/insulting religious creeds, punishable by a year in prison, a fine, or up to 40 lashes.

- Joint acts in execution of a criminal conspiracy.

The defense had called for the charges to be dropped due to a critical lack of physical evidence.

Harassment, arrests, and persecution of Christians have intensified since the secession of South Sudan in July 2011, when Bashir vowed to adopt

a stricter version of sharia Islamic law that would recognize only Islamic culture and the Arabic language.

The Sudanese Minister of Guidance and Endowments announced in April 2013 that no new licenses would be granted for building new churches in Sudan, citing a decrease in the South Sudanese population.

Just for the Record



Ten GA girls from **MT. PLEASANT CHURCH, GLOSTER**, and their leaders spent July 13 - 18 at Judson Baptist Retreat near Jackson, La.



UNION HALL CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, recently held a youth revival. Sammy Holcomb, speaker; Stonewater, music.



CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT, treated their children to a back to school parade Aug. 5. Mike Burns, pastor.



ENTERPRISE CHURCH, CLARKE COUNTY, recently ordained Allen Elmore and Casey Burt as deacons.



Youth from **EVANSVILLE CHURCH, COLDWATER**, went to Mission Arlington July 11 - 18, working with an apartment church doing children's church and promoting and hosting backyard Bible clubs.



PINE GROVE CHURCH, MAGEE, recently licensed Andrew Wallace to preach. He is shown with interim pastor Jay Hays.



Women from **FIRST CHURCH, BRANDON**, attended the Explorers Bible Study Conference at Oxford Church, July 31 - Aug. 1.

In other Church News:

► Charles Nail, pastor, **Hebron Church, Grenada**, will preach at First Church, Grenada Aug. 16, 10:30 a.m., on the anniversary of sixty years in ministry. Nail preached his first sermon at First Church in 1955, the summer he graduated from high school.

► **Pelahatchie Church, Pelahatchie**, will host Legacy Five in concert Aug. 14, 7 p.m. Love offering.

► **First Church, Terry**, exceeded its goal of \$1750 for the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village by giving a total of \$2325.43. The children in Vacation Bible School raised almost \$850.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name. (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.